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# Was this intelligence source silenced by media exposure?

A small story on Page 19 of ~~The Washington Post~~ of Jan. 23, reported that the French government had recalled one of its diplomats from India after he was implicated in a spy scandal in that country. Two private French citizens who also were reportedly involved already had fled the country.

The Indian government had arrested several high officials in the prime minister's office on charges of providing information to an unidentified foreign power. The home minister told Parliament that it had not yet been determined what foreign intelligence agency was involved.

The story went on to say that the Indian government had been alerted to the espionage operation by stories that had appeared in ~~The Washington Post~~ and ~~The New York Times~~ last Sept. 15. The stories concerned a CIA briefing of the Senate Intelligence Committee. They discussed a top-secret recommendation to the prime minister of India by some of her advisers suggesting a pre-emptive strike against a nuclear reactor in

Pakistan. The Indian government deduced that there must have been a leak from the prime minister's office. Surveillance of aides working in the office was begun, with the result that several aides were accused of divulging information to unauthorized foreigners.

The first report of the CIA briefing of the Senate Intelligence Committee appeared on ABC's "World News Tonight" on Sept. 13. Anchorman Peter Jennings read this statement: "There is concern on Capitol Hill tonight about a possible confrontation between India and Pakistan. ABC's John Scali has learned that some senators became alarmed after they learned of a possible Indian attack on a Pakistani nuclear facility. U.S. intelligence authorities insist that no special warning was given to the senators

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that any attack on the facility was imminent, that this was just one of several trouble spots worth watching closely. There has long been concern in India that Pakistan might be constructing a nuclear device. Pakistan has said it was not."

Two days later, on Sept. 15, Philip Taubman had a long story in *The New York Times* reporting that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had

received recommendations from some of her senior advisers that India carry out an air strike against the nuclear reactor at Kahuta, Pakistan. The purpose would be to prevent the development of nuclear weapons by the Pakistanis. Mr. Taubman said that both Sens. Barry Goldwater and Daniel Patrick Moynihan had expressed concern about the possibility of an Indian air strike against the Kahuta installation. Mr. Taubman said: "The CIA told the Senate committee, according to two members, that it had learned from a sensitive intelligence source that Mrs. Gandhi received recommendations this year from some senior aides that India attack the Kahuta plant to make sure that the enrichment process was not used for the development of weapons."

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*The Washington Post* story by Don Oberdorfer reported that govern-

ment officials in Washington had discounted as "alarmist" the ABC News report that Prime Minister Gandhi had been urged by her advisers to attack the Pakistani nuclear installation. Mr. Oberdorfer said some officials noted that the report appeared to come from a CIA briefing of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

It would appear that the CIA had acquired its information from a foreign intelligence agency that had developed valuable assets within the Indian government, a government with close ties to the Soviet Union. The CIA shared that information with senators, and some of them promptly blabbed to the media. The intelligence operation was destroyed, and we can assume that the foreign source will be less willing to share its secrets with the CIA in the future.

Apparently neither the senators nor the journalists worried about what would happen to the sensitive source if the information were made public. The people who run *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* claim that they are qualified to decide what should be kept secret.

Question: Did they blow this operation on purpose or did they goof?

# 3 Frenchmen Linked to Indian Spy Case

By STEVEN R. WEISMAN

Special to The New York Times

NEW DELHI, Jan. 23 — Indian investigators were reported today to have implicated at least three French nationals in an extensive espionage ring that purportedly passed sensitive military information to the West.

Disclosures about the spy ring have shaken the Government here and led to the resignation of one of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's top advisers, as well as the arrest of more than a dozen Indian officials and businessmen.

Prime Minister Gandhi first disclosed the existence of the espionage operation last Friday, but since then he and his aides have refused to give out details on an official basis.

Indian newspapers, however, have been awash this week with articles about petty bribery among clerks, messengers and junior officers throughout the Government, along with the apparent involvement of Indian and French businessmen.

## Reports of Bribes

There have also been reports of bribes involving imported liquor, cash and "dancing girls," a term for prostitutes. The Press Trust of India, the leading news agency, has reported that 11 officials and 3 Indian businessmen have been arrested. Other intelligence officials have apparently told the newspapers that as many as 16 arrests have been made.

Most of the Government officials were reportedly low-level. But the arrest of a deputy secretary and two other aides in the central Government led this week to the resignation of P. C. Alexander, principal secretary to the Prime Minister and one of perhaps a half-dozen members of his inner circle.

Speaking this week before the Parliament, the 40-year-old Prime Minister praised Mr. Alexander for accepting at least part of the responsibility for the espionage ring even though there was no evidence that he knew anything about it.

The resignation, Mr. Gandhi said, was "in keeping with the highest traditions of the service."

## Grumbling Over News Leaks

Mr. Gandhi's actions in the last week have generally brought praise even from opposition members of Parliament. The spy case appears to be reinforcing Mr. Gandhi's reputation as a "Mr. Clean" who is trying to break from the policies and practices of his mother, the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who was assassinated Oct. 31.

For all the accounts of boxes full of documents being uncovered, there has been very little specific information about precisely which secrets were compromised and which foreign governments obtained the information.

Newspapers now describe the "kingpin" of the operation as Coomer Nairn, a regional manager of the Maneklal Group of Industries, a Bombay-based company involved in Government military contracts.

After the disclosure earlier this week that a French diplomat was involved in the spy ring, France recalled "for consultations" its deputy military attaché here, Col. Alain Bolley.

## 'Punitive Action' Promised

Colonel Bolley has denied any connection to any espionage ring. According to a report in The Statesman on Wednesday France informed India Tuesday that it would take "punitive action" against Colonel Bolley.

Today several Indian newspapers reported that two French businessmen left India in the last few days before Government investigators were about to arrest them. There was no confirmation of their identities, however.

There have also been reports that among the secrets compromised were confidential reports from the Prime Minister's office and intelligence notes on the security situation in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and in turbulent areas of India itself, including the Punjab and Assam.

Also said to have been compromised were details about sensitive negotiations on military procurement. India is embarking on a significant military buildup, and is discussing possible weapons purchases with France, Britain, and West Germany. Its extensive military purchases from the Soviet Union have also long been of interest to Western intelligence agencies.

*Times*

## **2 Tied to Spy Case Said to Flee India**

NEW DELHI—Two French nationals allegedly trafficking in state secrets slipped out of India before the French government recalled a diplomat also said to be implicated in India's spy scandal, The United News of India reported yesterday.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi told Parliament that he will go "to great depths to find out what has happened, why it has happened and how it affects the country's security," The Associated Press reported.

Home Affairs Minister S.B. Chavan told Parliament that investigators had not determined yet if the CIA, Soviet KGB or some other foreign intelligence agency was involved.

The Hindustan Times reported that the government's suspicions were first aroused by stories in The Washington Post and The New York Times about a CIA briefing to the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee on a top-secret Indian plan to attack a Pakistani nuclear reactor. It was then that counterintelligence started surveillance of the prime minister's aides, the paper said.

# Secret Papers Found in India Espionage Case

By SANJOY HAZARIKA

Special to The New York Times

NEW DELHI, Jan. 19 — An Indian magistrate said today that intelligence officials had found many incriminating documents, including photocopies of military deals and secret military information, in the homes of several Government officials and others arrested in a major espionage scandal here.

One of the suspects had worked in the Prime Minister's office for 15 years.

The magistrate, Bharat Bhushan, said, "The police told me that the suspects were passing on vital information connected with defense and our national security to certain foreign

powers, although they have not disclosed the names of these powers."

On Friday, Mr. Bhushan ordered eight men suspected of spying for foreign agencies into police custody until Jan. 28.

All have been charged with violations of the Official Secrets Act and criminal conspiracy against the state.

Conviction could result in a death sentence or life imprisonment.

The United News of India reported late tonight that 11 people were being held.

Mr. Bhushan said he did not remember the names of the accused, but said they included two under secretaries and one deputy secretary. At least one

of them, he said, was from the Defense Ministry.

One of the others was identified as N. T. Kher, a personal assistant to Dr. P. C. Alexander, a top aide to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Today, Dr. Alexander said he had resigned his post as principal secretary, a top adviser to the Prime Minister. Others held include a clerk in President Zail Singh's office, an aide to the Secretary of Defense Production and two business executives.

Mr. Bhushan said the court was cleared of nonrelated litigants and lawyers for the brief hearing. He said the suspects were in their 40's and 50's and had no attorneys to represent them.

The Press Trust of India news agency said that among the seized documents were copies of reports on Cabinet meetings on the Punjab and Sri Lanka.

The news agency quoted intelligence sources as saying that those arrested had "made a photocopy of almost all the important files in the Prime Minister's and Defense Ministry secretariat."

The arrests were made Thursday and Friday, official sources say. But a Home Affairs Ministry spokesman said he knew nothing of the case. Home Affairs Minister S. B. Chavan did not respond to more than a dozen phone calls to his office and home. Aides said he was busy at meetings.

A spokesman for Prime Minister Gandhi said Mr. Kher had worked for about 15 years as a personal aide to

senior officials on the Prime Minister's staff.

H. Y. Sharada Prasad, the spokesman, said he did not have details of Mr. Kher's service record, and he refused to give further details about him.

Mr. Kher, in his position as personal assistant, had access to important Government documents, letters and telephone conversations. Dr. Alexander is among the country's most respected civil servants and had held the post of Principal Secretary for about five years, primarily under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Mr. Gandhi's mother.

Newspaper and news agency reports say that intelligence agents at Mr. Gandhi's residence had become suspicious of the movements of some of the suspects and acted after several weeks of surveillance. The reports said the case was followed up by the Intelli-

gence Bureau and army intelligence and was part of a special drive authorized by Mr. Gandhi to overhaul the security system that failed to protect his mother, who was assassinated Oct. 31 by some of her Sikh bodyguards.

Official sources identified the clerk in President Singh's press office as S. Sankaran, and another as Jagdish Chandra, an assistant in the office of the Secretary for Defense Production.

Official sources, meanwhile, identified one of the arrested businessmen as Coomar Narain, the regional manager of Maneklal S. L. M., which also has offices in Bombay.

# Worsening India-Pakistan Ties Worry U.S.

By PHILIP TAUBMAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 14 — The Reagan Administration has become concerned that a recent deterioration in relations between India and Pakistan could ultimately lead to renewed hostilities between the two countries, Administration officials said today.

While the officials said the threat of a military confrontation did not appear imminent, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India has received recommendations from some senior advisers that India conduct an air raid against a Pakistani atomic installation to prevent the development of nuclear weapons by Pakistan.

The officials said that Mrs. Gandhi had resisted the recommendation and that intelligence information reaching Washington indicated that such an air strike remained unlikely.

A State Department spokesman, Alan Romberg, said today, "We have been concerned in recent weeks by suggestions of a temporary cooling in Indo-Pakistani relations."

Mr. Romberg said signs of the chill included "cancellation of scheduled nonaggression talks, cease-fire line clashes in Kashmir, public recriminations over the handling of hijackers and allegations of meddling in each other's affairs."

Mr. Romberg added, "We do not believe that conflict between the two countries was or is imminent."

## C.I.A. Briefs Senators

Members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence were briefed about the renewed tension on Thursday by the Central Intelligence Agency, according to Administration officials.

The officials said that the panel's chairman and deputy chairman, Senators Barry M. Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, expressed concern about the possibility of an Indian air raid on Pakistan's nuclear installation in Kahuta, near the border with India.

Pakistan has been widely reported to be working on uranium enrichment at the plant, in part with help from China,

according to Administration officials. The enrichment of uranium is a key process in the development of nuclear weapons. Pakistan asserts that the plant is for peaceful nuclear research, but it has not permitted inspection of the installation.

The C.I.A. told the Senate committee, according to two members, that it had learned from a sensitive intelligence source that Mrs. Gandhi received recommendations this year from some senior aides that India attack the Kahuta plant to make sure that the enrichment process was not used for the development of weapons.

President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan has repeatedly said that Pakistan has no intention of developing nuclear weapons.

India tested its first nuclear explosive in 1974. Like Pakistan, it has refused to permit international inspection of most of its nuclear installations.

Relations between India and Pakistan, which have fought three wars in the last 36 years, had appeared to be improving in recent years. The two countries opened discussions about improving relations and Mrs. Gandhi and General Zia met in New Delhi in November 1982 for the first talks of substance between the leaders of India and Pakistan in more than a decade.

## Start of Deterioration

But the good feelings unexpectedly began to evaporate late last year, Administration officials said. In January, India accused Pakistan of threatening its security with a major arms buildup, with American help, and of preparing for war.

India then denied a report in the controlled Pakistani press that it had deployed 29 army divisions on the Pakistani border.

The tensions led to the cancellation of the nonaggression talks, which began after the meeting between Mrs. Gandhi and General Zia. A commission established by the two leaders to foster friendly relations met once in June 1983. The commission, in turn, set up four subcommittees to help develop improve relations in specific areas, including trade, communications, sci-

ence and technology, information, education, culture, sports, travel and tourism.

The latest problem between the two countries involved the hijacking of an Indian Airlines jetliner in August by a group of Sikh students. The plane, which was hijacked on a domestic flight in India, made two stops in Pakistan, at Lahore and Karachi. The plane was refueled at both cities and India later charged that the hijackers were given weapons in Lahore. Pakistan's role became a major issue in India, according to Administration officials. The hijacking ended in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

There have also been charges in India that Pakistan has supported Sikh militants in Punjab state, the officials said.

In addition, they said, there have been sporadic clashes between Indian and Pakistani forces along the cease-fire line in Kashmir.

## Costa Rica Is Holding Talks With Nicaragua on Tensions

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Sept. 14 (UPI) — Costa Rican and Nicaraguan officials are holding talks in France aimed at settling border tensions caused by rebels fighting the Nicaraguan Government, the French and Costa Rican Governments said today.

Neither the site of the meeting nor the names of those involved in the talks were disclosed.

The Costa Rican Foreign Minister, Carlos José Gutiérrez, said in a statement issued here that France offered a month ago to act as an intermediary to attempt to settle the border problems.

According to a report reaching here from Paris, a spokesman for the French Foreign Ministry said talks were taking place in France between Nicaragua and Costa Rica with a French diplomat in attendance.

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